A

LETTER

TO

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON:

TOGETHER WITH

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A PAMPHLET LATELY

PUBLISHED BY DR. SHEBBEARE.

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TO

Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON:

OCCASIONED BY

HIS LATE POLITICAL PUBLICATIONS.

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A PAMPHLET LATELY PUBLISHED BY DR. SHEBBEARE.

" Here let those reign, whom PENSIONS *can incite*
" To vote a PATRIOT *black, a* COURTIER *white;*
" Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
" And plead for pirates in the face of day;
" With SLAVISH *tenets taint our poison'd youth,*
" And lend a LYE *the confidence of* TRUTH."

JOHNSON.

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A

LETTER

TO

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

SIR,

WHEN a man, who has rendered himſelf eminent by his productions in morals, and in polite literature, engages in political contentions, and in thoſe which are apprehended to be of great national importance, it may reaſonably be expected of ſuch a writer, that he ſhould diſtinguiſh himſelf not by party violence and rancour, but by moderation and by wiſdom: and that at leaſt he ſhould not wholly loſe ſight of that liberality of ſentiment, which ſhould characterize the ſcholar; nor of that decency and politeneſs, which ſhould adorn the gentleman. But unhappily your political productions have been chiefly remarkable for

bitterneſs of invective, unjuſt and uncandid repreſentations, the moſt bigotted prejudices againſt them whom you oppoſe, and the higheſt ſtrains of contemptuous inſolence. You have written in a manner which muſt degrade you in the judgment of the impartial public, in a manner utterly unworthy of a great, or liberal, or philoſophic mind, and for which even your being a royal penſioner cannot apologize.

When I firſt heard that a penſion had been conferred upon you by thoſe in power, I hoped that it might have been given as the reward of merit. I knew that your literary labours, your elaborate Dictionary, and other works, in which you had diſplayed great force of genius, extenſive knowledge, and uncommon powers of language, had given you a juſt claim to public ſupport and encouragement. I thought it not impoſſible, that thoſe by whom your penſion was procured, might have been ſatisfied with rewarding your ingenuity, without impoſing any ſervices on you unworthy of your character. But the uſe that has been ſince made of you,

renders

renders it ſufficiently apparent, that a penſion was conferred on you with other views. It now ſeems probable, that your known Jacobitical principles, which, however ſtrange it may be thought, appear now to be in high eſtimation at court, were among your chief recommendations; and that it was theſe, added to the hope of employing you in the ſervice of your new maſters, which really occaſioned your being placed in the liſt of royal penſioners.

It has been ſaid, that few men are capable of bearing proſperity well; and if receiving a penſion may be conſidered as a ſpecies of proſperity, it appears ſufficiently evident, that this has not had a favourable effect either upon your head, or upon your heart. Not one truly valuable piece has iſſued from your pen, ſince you received the royal bounty. From that time, your native pride and arrogance appear to have been augmented; and your latter pieces are far from breathing that virtuous ſpirit, by which your former writings were generally diſtinguiſhed. Inſtead of employing your talents in the ſervice of the republic of letters, and in benefitting mankind,

you are now dwindled into the rancorous writer of a party; and produce only ſuch performances as the *Falſe Alarm*, the *Thoughts on the tranſactions reſpecting Falkland's Iſlands*, and *the Patriot*.

DURING the laſt reign, you were generally conſidered as one of the moſt bigotted Jacobites in the kingdom. It is commonly ſaid, that you ſcarcely ever ſpoke of the family on the throne with any degree of temper or decency; and you not unfrequently exhibited in your writings your averſion to the government. It was then a ſubject of your moſt pathetic complaints, that England was *oppreſſed with exciſe (a)*, that it was a *cheated* and a *groaning nation*, and a *beggar'd land (b)*. We were then curſed with a *penſioned band*, and with *hireling ſenators*; and it was a *thoughtleſs age lull'd to* SERVITUDE *(c)*.

You

(a) Vid. London, a Poem, in imitation of the third ſatire of Juvenal, publiſhed in Dodſley's Miſcellanies, vol. I. p. 188.

(b) London, ut ſupra, p. 189, 191, 196.

(c) London, ut ſupra, p. 189, 196, 197.

You then wiſhed for thoſe happy days of old, when juſtice was uprightly and impartially adminiſtered. You ſighed for the age of Alfred, becauſe, as you inform us,

Fair Juſtice then, without conſtraint ador'd,
Held high the ſteady ſcale, but deep'd the ſword;
No ſpies were paid, no SPECIAL JURIES *known,*
Bleſt Age! but ah! how diff'rent from our own! (d)

But whatever evils the nation ſuffered from an iniquitous government in the laſt reign, they are, it ſeems, happily removed in the preſent; ſo that you can now diſcover nothing to complain of, but the turbulence and wickedneſs of the popular party.

As this country was ſo much oppreſſed, and laboured under ſuch a variety of evils, in the reign of George the Second, it may amuſe a ſpeculative man to enquire, by what means ſo happy a revolution in public affairs has been effectuated in the Reign of George the Third. Are our taxes leſſened? No. Is the nation freed from *exciſe?* No. Are the rights of the ſubject more religiouſly preſerved? No. Is Juſtice

(d) *London, ut ſupra.*

tice more impartially adminiſtered in our courts of law? No. Are *ſpecial juries* leſs frequent? No. Has the commerce of the nation been encreaſed, and its intereſts better attended to? No. Are our Parliaments more incorrupt, and leſs under the influence of the court? No. What is it then that has ſo wonderfully changed the face of public affairs, as entirely to reconcile the author of the RAMBLER to the government? The whole may be anſwered in one ſhort ſentence. The grievances of the kingdom are removed; the nation is no more in a groaning or a ſinking ſtate; for DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON HAS A PENSION. It follows, as a neceſſary conſequence, that wiſdom preſides over our councils, that all complaints againſt the adminiſtration muſt be unjuſt and unreaſonable, and that we have the happineſs to poſſeſs "a govern-" ment approaching nearer to perfection, " than any that experience has known, or " hiſtory related *(e)*!"

YOU have obſerved, *(Falſe Alarm*, p. 28.) that "the acceptance of a *place* contami-" nates

(e) Falſe Alarm, p. 45.

"nates no character;" and you have probably the ſame ideas of the acceptance of a penſion. But ſurely the characters of thoſe men are contaminated, who are induced by a place, to ſacrifice the rights of their country; or by a penſion to write in defence of meaſures that are oppreſſive and iniquitous. As to your engaging in vindication of an arbitrary adminiſtration, ſome allowance ought, perhaps, to be made, for that attachment to deſpotic principles which you early imbibed, and by which you have ſo often diſtinguiſhed yourſelf. That bigotry which could lead you to celebrate in the higheſt ſtrains of panegyric, that moſt eminent high-church ſaint, archbiſhop LAUD, and that zeal in favour of tyranny which could induce you to deplore the death of the Earl of STRAFFORD *(f)*, may perhaps be pleaded in extenuation of your conduct. And as you appear to have been always diſpoſed to juſtify the tyranny of the Stuarts, you were

(f) Vid. the Vanity of human wiſhes, a Poem, by Samuel Johnſon, printed in the 3d volume of Dodſley's Collection of Poems, and alſo in the 2d volume of Miſcellanies and fugitive pieces, publiſhed by Davies.

were already half prepared to defend deſpotic proceedings under a prince of another family. Though your Jacobite prejudices gave you a predilection in favour of the Stuarts, yet it might ſomewhat reconcile you to the government of the Houſe of Hanover, if you had reaſon to believe that principles were now adopted at court, ſimilar to thoſe of that family, whoſe attempts to enſlave the nation had been the cauſe of their expulſion from the throne. But whatever allowances may be made to you on this account, you are ſtill extremely cenſurable for thoſe notorious fallacies and miſrepreſentations, and that groſs ſcurrillity, with which your late political productions ſo much abound.

As a ſpecimen of the moderation and civility with which you have expreſſed yourſelf concerning the party whom you oppoſe, I ſhall collect a few of the rhetorical flowers, and polite phraſes, which are ſcattered throughout your political pieces in ſuch bountiful profuſion. Of JUNIUS you ſay, that *he burſt into notice with a blaze of impudence*; and of Mr. WILKES, that he was *a varlet driven out of*

of the Houſe with public infamy. The popular party are ſtiled by you a *deſpicable faction, bellowers of ſedition, ruffians who would gain power by miſchief and confuſion,* and *thoſe who having fixed their hopes on public calamities, ſit like vultures waiting for a day of carnage.* You alſo ſay, "Of this "faction what evil may not be credited? "They have hitherto ſhewn *no virtue,* "and very little wit, beyond that miſ- "chievous cunning, for which it is held "by Hale that *children may be hanged.*"— You have alſo diſcovered, that they are more wicked than the Devil. — "As they "have not the wit of Satan, they have "not his virtue."—"Their hope is male- "volence, and their good is evil." *(g)*— And you likewiſe complain of *the howl of Plebeian patriotiſm,* and *the howling violence of patriotic rage.*

Is this the language of a man whoſe underſtanding has been refined by literature? Is this the language of a ſcholar, a gentleman, or a philoſopher? In the

C heat

(g) Thoughts on the tranſactions reſpecting Falkland's Iſlands, p. 41, 70, 71, &c. *Vid.* alſo the *Falſe Alarm.*

heat of a political controverſy, ſuch ſcurrillity might not have been wondered at in low and vulgar minds; but ſurely ſomething better might have been juſtly expected from a teacher of morals, and a profeſſed improver of our language. Nor do the terms in which you have expreſſed yourſelf of them whom you oppoſe, convey a very favourable idea of your heart. The utmoſt ſtretch of candour cannot lead any man to ſuppoſe, that you believe one half of the evil that you have ſaid of the popular party. You muſt be the moſt prejudiced man in the kingdom if you do: and if you do not, have you any right to be conſidered as a man of principle, or probity?

SUCH is your rancour againſt all who have engaged in any oppoſition to the court, that you cannot expreſs yourſelf with decency even of the Earl of CHATHAM. The eloquence of that illuſtrious nobleman, who is unqueſtionably one of the greateſt ornaments of his age and country, is deſcribed by you under the contemptuous

temptuous appellation of *feudal gabble (h)*; and you obſerve that it will be happy for him, "if the nation ſhall at laſt diſmiſs "him to nameleſs obſcurity." But however highly you may eſtimate your own talents, be aſſured, that you will be extremely fortunate in this reſpect, if your fame ſhould be as laſting as that of the Earl of CHATHAM, whoſe name will be mentioned with diſtinguiſhed honour in the annals of this country, ſo long as any records of it ſhall be preſerved.

THE people are frequently honoured by you with the polite appellation of *the rabble*; and the citizens of London, and the freeholders of Middleſex, are alſo ſpoken of by you with ſimilar contempt. They have been both active in the oppoſition to the court, and muſt therefore experience the effects of your loyal indignation. The inhabitants of London, have, indeed, long been under obligations to you, for the genteel terms in which you

(g) Thoughts on the Tranſactions reſpecting Falkland's Iſlands, p. 37.

have ſpoken of their city. It was thus deſcribed by you many years ſince:

> LONDON, *the needy villain's general home,*
> *The common ſewer of Paris and of Rome.*

The freeholders of Middleſex have alſo the honour to be thus diſtinguiſhed by you: "Mr. Wilkes, and the freeholders "of Middleſex, might all ſink into non-"exiſtence, without any other effect, "than that there would be room made "for a *new rabble*, and a new retailer of "ſedition and obſcenity *(i)*." It is needleſs to make any remarks on this paſſage. It is equally characterized by politeneſs and humanity.

In your laſt political publication, *the Patriot*, ſpeaking of the opponents of government, you ſay, "The greater, far "the greater number of thoſe who rave, "and rail, and enquire, and accuſe, "neither ſuſpect, nor fear, nor care for "the public; but hope to force their way "to riches by virulence and invective, "and are vehement and clamorous, only "that

(i) Falſe Alarm, p. 35.

" that they may be ſooner hired to be " ſilent *(k)*." That this aſſertion is notoriouſly untrue, muſt be evident to every man who will conſider it. A great majority of thoſe who are diſſatisfied with the meaſures of government, and who teſtify their diſcontent, cannot poſſibly have any hope of acquiring riches by their oppoſition, or cheriſh any hope of being bribed to ſilence. But you have, with an equal diſregard to truth, alſo paſſed a ſimilar unjuſt and undiſtinguiſhing cenſure of the popular party, in the *Falſe Alarm*. You there commend the King for having neglected or *forgotten* the many petitions ſent to him from different parts of the kingdom; becauſe you ſay, " he might eaſily " know, that what was preſented as the " ſenſe of the people, was the ſenſe " only of the *profligate* and *diſſolute (l)*." That this is a groſs falſhood muſt be evident to every candid perſon in the kingdom, of whatever party. Among thoſe who approved of the petitions to the throne, and who joined in their complaints of thoſe grievances of which the petitions con-

(k) Patriot, p. 5, 6. *(l) Falſe Alarm*, 48.

contained an enumeration, were many of the worthieſt perſons in this country; and not a few who were diſtinguiſhed both by abilities and learning, as well as by integrity. Surely then neither party violence, nor the influence of a penſion, can be pleaded even by your friends as a juſtification of what you have written. Nor can you poſſibly vindicate yourſelf, unleſs you think it right to ſupport the cauſe of your patrons, not only by a total diſregard of candour, but by the moſt groſs deviations from truth and juſtice.

You obſerve in *the Patriot*, p. 1. that "at the end of every ſeven years comes "the *Saturnalian ſeaſon*, when the people "of Great Britain may *pleaſe themſelves* "with the choice of their repreſentatives. "This happy day has now arrived, ſome-"what ſooner than it could be claimed." Your compariſon here of the period of election with a Roman feſtival, wherein the *ſlaves* were put on a level with their *maſters*, appears to convey in it a compliment to your countrymen not of the moſt delicate kind. And as to your remark, that *this happy day has arrived ſomewhat*

ſooner

ſooner than it could be claimed, for which you ſeem to ſuppoſe that the people are under ſome obligation to adminiſtration, it is, I believe, far from being generally apprehended, that the unexpected diſſolution of the parliament aroſe from any deſire to gratify, or to ſerve the people. And if it was done with the views that are ſuppoſed, little gratitude can be due from them on that account.

In the courſe of thoſe obſervations, wherein you profeſs to point out the marks which diſtinguiſh true patriots from thoſe who falſely aſſume that character, you ſay, "Some claim a place in the liſt of "Patriots by an acrimonious and unremit-"ting oppoſition to the court. This mark "is by no means infallible. Patriotiſm "is not neceſſarily included in rebel-"lion *(m)*." Was it your deſign here to inſinuate, that *oppoſition to the court* and *rebellion* are ſynonimous terms? Something like this appears to have been intended. That oppoſition to adminiſtration merely for the ſake of oppoſition, or when engaged

(m) Patriot, p. 4.

gaged in from private views, is not Patriotiſm, may readily be granted. But if the prevailing meaſures of government are unjuſt, pernicious, and deſpotic, the pureſt public virtue would dictate an oppoſition to ſuch an adminiſtration: and it is natural and reaſonable for the people to conſider thoſe as their friends, who diſtinguiſh themſelves by their oppoſition to meaſures of this kind. With whatever caution the people may elect their repreſentatives, they are often liable to be deceived. But they always act rightly in electing ſuch men for members of the Houſe of Commons, whom they believe to be friends of freedom, and diſpoſed to join in a vigorous oppoſition to all ſchemes for aggrandizing the power of the crown, or depriving the people of their rights.

You ſay, *Patriot*, p. 4. that "a man "may hate his king, yet not love his "country." I ſhall not diſpute this aſſertion, becauſe I conſider yourſelf as an evidence of its truth. In the laſt reign, no man ſuſpected you of any affection for the King: and yet there were reaſons to believe that you had not much more for your country.

country. When the reſt of the nation were rejoicing at the advantage which they had gained over their enemies by the conqueſt of Louiſbourgh, you ſeemed to view it with diſguſt; and therefore wrote an Eſſay in the *Idler*, calculated to depreciate the merit of the Engliſh in that capture, and to leſſen the general joy on the occaſion, under the pretence of ſhewing the partiality of national hiſtorians *(n)*. You remark in that eſſay, that "there is "no crime more infamous than the vio- "lation of truth." It would have been much for your reputation as a moral man, if you had attended more to this conſideration in your late political productions. However, that you are not tinctured with many prejudices in favour of your country, is ſufficiently apparent to thoſe who are converſant in your writings *(o)*. And let

(n) Vid. the *Idler*, N° 20.

(o) Vid. Dr. Johnſon's attempts to juſtify the proceedings of the Spaniards, in his Thoughts on the tranſactions reſpecting Falkland's Iſlands; and his arguments in favour of the conduct of the French in America, in "Obſervations on the State of Affairs in 1756," reprinted in the third volume of Miſcellaneous and Fugitive Pieces.

it alſo be remembered, that no man can with propriety be ſaid to love his country, who will be induced by a penſion to defend violations of the rights of his fellow ſubjects. As to that public liberty, by which England has long been ſo honourably diſtinguiſhed from other nations, the very idea of it appears to be offenſive to you: and the acrimony with which you have criticiſed Dr. Blackwell's "Memoirs of "the Court of Auguſtus," *(p)* ſeems to have ariſen from no other ſource, than your diſlike of that ingenious writer; on account of the zeal which he had diſcovered in ſupport of liberty, and the common rights of mankind.

You obſerve, *Patriot, p.* 16. that "a true "patriot is no laviſh promiſer: he under-"takes not to ſhorten parliaments: to re-"peal laws; or to change the mode of "repreſentation, tranſmitted by our an-"ceſtors." If you mean by this, that no true patriot will undertake to effectuate theſe things himſelf, becauſe every individual

(p) Vid. the third volume of Miſcellaneous and Fugitive Pieces.

vidual knows that they are not within his power, you ſay what may be true, but what is nothing to the purpoſe; for no man, whether Patriot or otherwiſe, has undertaken any thing ſo abſurd. But if you mean, that no man, conſiſtently with the character of a true patriot, can promiſe to uſe his endeavours, and to vote for ſhortening the duration of parliaments, for repealing bad laws, or changing the mode of parliamentary repreſentation, your aſſertions are without proof; and, as I apprehend, totally repugnant to reaſon.

THAT long parliaments are a very conſiderable national evil, is the opinion of many of the beſt and moſt intelligent friends to the free conſtitution of this country. And with reſpect to any man who is of theſe ſentiments, what can there be inconſiſtent with true patriotiſm, in his declaring to thoſe whom he offers to ſerve as their repreſentative, that he will uſe his endeavours to procure a law for ſhortening the duration of parliaments? There can be nothing in this repugnant to the pureſt principles of patriotiſm; and your aſſertion muſt, therefore, be wholly groundleſs.

It is the ſame with reſpect to a promiſe made by a candidate, to uſe his endeavours to procure a repeal of any other laws that are apprehended to be detrimental to the nation. The people have a right to apply for a repeal of ſuch laws; and there can be nothing inconſiſtent with public ſpirit, that thoſe who offer themſelves to be truſtees for the people, ſhould make declarations of their readineſs to comply with the requiſitions of their conſtituents.

As to *changing the mode of repreſentation tranſmitted by our anceſtors*, all who have conſidered this ſubject with any degree of attention, muſt be convinced of the inequality of the preſent mode of parliamentary repreſentation, and that it is productive of great evils to the conſtitution *(q)*. In what reſpect then can it poſſibly be inconſtent with true Patriotiſm, that a candidate for the office of member of parliament, ſhould promiſe that he will uſe his endeavours

(q) See this matter accurately ſtated, and placed in a very ſtrong and juſt light, in a valuable work lately publiſhed, intitled, *Political Diſquiſitions*, vol. I. p. 39—72.

vours to procure a redreſs of this grievance? You ſay, that the true Patriot knows, that "futurity is not in his power." Every man knows this, and nothing more has been required of any candidate, but that he ſhould uſe his endeavours to effectuate what was required of him by his conſtituents, when it ſhould be in his power. As to your other obſervation, that the true patriot knows, that "all times are "not alike favourable to change;" this is nothing but the common cant of thoſe men who are deſirous of preventing improvement of any kind, when it interferes with their private views; and who, when they are aſhamed of objecting to a meaſure evidently good, content themſelves with ſaying, that the preſent is not a proper time. And indeed to people of this claſs, no time ever arrives, which they ſuppoſe proper for the diſcharge of their duty. To do it is not their aim; they are only ſolicitous for ſome new excuſe, or plauſible evaſion.

"MUCH leſs," you ſay, "does the true "patriot make a vague and indefinite pro-"miſe of obeying the mandates of his

"con-

" conſtituents. He knows the prejudices " of faction, and the inconſtancy of the " multitude." But upon this it may be obſerved, that the notion that members of parliament are not under an obligation to obey the inſtructions of their conſtituents, is a novel doctrine. It was not unfrequent formerly for members of the Houſe of Commons, and ſometimes the whole body of them, to refuſe to vote, till they had conſulted thoſe who ſent them. And both Houſes of Parliament have often been adjourned to give them time to do this. Lord Coke ſays, " It is the cuſtom " of parliament when any new device is " moved for in parliament, on the King's " behalf, for his aid, or the like, that " the Commons may anſwer, They dare " not agree to it without conference with " their countries *(r)*." And ſurely nothing can be more juſt, than that thoſe who act as the deputies of others, ſhould conform to the inſtructions of thoſe from whom they receive their delegated power. As to the apprehenſion, that injudicious inſtructions might be ſent to the members, let

(r) Vid. Political Diſquiſitions, vol. I. p. 191, 200.

let it be remembered, that this would hardly be the caſe with many places in the kingdom at once; and therefore, if it ſhould happen in a few places, could not be ſuppoſed materially to affect the final determination of the Houſe. When inſtructions have been ſent to members from many parts of the kingdom at once, they will, I believe, always be found to be in favour of ſome object of great and evident national utility; and when theſe inſtructions have been diſregarded, it has been to the public detriment. The *prejudices of faction*, and the *inconſtancy of the multitude*, which you ſo *dolorouſly bewail*, would not be in any degree ſo prejudicial to the nation, not even the prejudices of the Jacobite faction, as the having a Houſe of Commons regardleſs of the ſenſe of their conſtituents, and ready to vote as any miniſter ſhou. ! direct them.

As in the laſt parliament, the dependance of the Houſe of Commons on their conſtituents ſeemed often to be forgotten, or diſregarded; and the connection evidently was, in general, not between the members

and

and their conſtituents, but between the members and the miniſter, it was high time that the people ſhould propoſe ſome *teſts*, in order to ſecure the fidelity of their repreſentatives. And the particulars to which they were required to declare their aſſent, were of great national concernment, and of evident utility; and not matters of difficult diſcuſſion, or which depended on times and circumſtances. It would have been well if teſts of this kind had generally been propoſed to candidates throughout the kingdom; it had been much talked of; and to prevent this, by taking the people unprepared, was probably a principal cauſe of the ſudden diſſolution of the laſt parliament.

You have alſo laboured in the *Patriot* to vindicate the *Quebec Act*; and in ſupport of it you urge, *p.* 11. that "Perſe-"cution is not more virtuous in a Proteſ-"tant than a Papiſt; and that while we "blame Lewis the Fourteenth, for his "dragoons and his gallies, we ought, "when power comes into our hands, to "uſe it with greater equity." This is only confounding the ſtate of the queſtion,

by

by an attempt to refute principles that were not advanced by the opponents of the *Act*. It was never pretended, that it would have been juſt to perſecute the Papiſts in Canada, or to have deprived them of the exerciſe of their religion. But there was ſurely no neceſſity for giving Popery ſuch a legal eſtabliſhment there, under a Britiſh government, as that their prieſts ſhould have the ſame right to claim their eccleſiaſtical revenues, as the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church in England. It has, indeed, been ſaid by another apologiſt for the Quebec Act, that "when the free "exerciſe of the national religion was "given to the Canadian nation, it could "never be underſtood that they were to "be *deprived* of their clergy; and if not, "a national proviſion for that clergy fol-"lows of courſe *(s)*." But why ſo? Are the Proteſtant Diſſenters in England deprived of their clergy? And yet it is well known, that no legal proviſion is made for their maintenance. They are ſupported only by the voluntary contributions of the

 diſſent-

(s) Letter to the Earl of Chatham on the Quebec Bill, attributed to Sir William Meredith, p. 24, 25.

diſſenting laity. Would it not have been ſufficient, if the Popiſh clergy had been put upon the ſame footing? They would hardly have complained of ill treatment in this caſe. Indeed of whom could they have complained? Not of the Engliſh government, who allowed them the free exerciſe of their religion, and left the laity to ſupport them as liberally as they pleaſed. And ſurely the Popiſh laity could not have complained, when they were allowed liberty of conſcience, and permitted to ſupport their clergy in that way which they thought beſt. Neither clergy nor laity, therefore, could, with any ſhadow of reaſon, have complained of the Engliſh government; for if the clergy had not thought themſelves ſufficiently ſupported, they would have had no blame to throw on any but their own people. And let it be ſuppoſed, that in conſequence of the laity not being compelled to pay the clergy, Popery had decreaſed in Canada. Would this have been thought an evil, by a truly Proteſtant King, or a truly Proteſtant Parliament? It is impoſſible.

IT may be ſaid, that Popery was the religion of the inhabitants of Quebec, when it was taken by the Engliſh; or, as you expreſs it, that "the inhabitants, "being French, were always Papiſts." Be it ſo: but is that a reaſon why French Papiſts, in a country conquered by the Engliſh, ſhould be put on a better footing than Proteſtant Diſſenters in England? Is it juſt, or reaſonable, or decent, that in any part of the Britiſh dominions public proviſion ſhould be made for a Popiſh clergy, whilſt a *legal* toleration is refuſed in England to Proteſtant Diſſenting miniſters?

YOU ſay, that "when Canada with its "inhabitants was yielded, the free enjoy-"ment of their religion was ſtipulated; a "condition of which King William, who "was no propagator of Popery, gave an "example nearer home, at the ſurrender "of Limeric" *(t)*. It was certainly reaſonable, that when Canada was conquered, a ſtipulation ſhould be made to the inhabitants of the free exerciſe of their

 religion;

(t) Patriot, p. 12.

religion; and it would have been extreme injuſtice and inhumanity to have violated that ſtipulation. But there was no neceſſity, in conſequence of the capitulation made with the Canadians, that an act of Parliament ſhould afterwards be paſſed to compel them to pay their own prieſts. The caſe of the ſurrender of Limeric, therefore, is not a ſimilar one, nor can with any propriety be urged in ſupport of the Quebec Act; for it is that which is now juſtly the ſubject of complaint, and not the articles of capitulation, or the adherence to thoſe articles.

You obſerve, *Patriot*, p. 13. that if liberty of conſcience "be an indulgence, it may "be allowed to Papiſts, while it is not "denied to other ſects;" and that "thoſe "at leaſt, who enjoy a toleration, ought "not to deny it to our new ſubjects." I am far from conſidering liberty of conſcience as an indulgence of government. It is a right of nature, which no government can deprive men of, without being guilty of inhumanity and injuſtice. If the penal laws againſt Papiſts, were ever defenſible, it muſt have been from political con-

conſiderations, and a regard to the ſafety of the ſtate. How far they were juſtifiable on that ground, I ſhall not now enquire. But it may be remarked, that the conſidering Proteſtant Diſſenters and Papiſts as equally entitled to favour under the preſent government, is a kind of novel doctrine. However, if it were juſt, the Diſſenters would ſtill have reaſon to complain. At a time when a legal eſtabliſhment, and public maintenance for the clergy, have been granted to the Papiſts in Canada, the Diſſenters in England have been refuſed a legal toleration!

The Diſſenters are not only obliged to contribute their full ſhare towards the ſupport of the eſtabliſhed clergy, and the national worſhip, and to maintain their own clergy ſeparately; but the moſt unjuſt and oppreſſive laws are ſtill continued againſt them, by which their moſt learned and moſt reſpectable miniſters are ſubjected to pains and penalties, to heavy fines, and to impriſonment. Theſe laws, it is true, are not at preſent put in force; but the Diſſenting clergy are conſtantly liable to proſecutions, and yet have been repeatedly refuſed

refuſed any legal ſecurity. And this at the very period when Papiſts are placed on ſuch a footing by a Britiſh Parliament, that they have the freeſt exerciſe of their religion, are not required to pay to the ſupport of any clergy but their own, who have a legal maintenance afforded them, and who are not ſhackled with any ſuch ſubſcriptions, as are required by law of Diſſenting miniſters in England. Are the Proteſtant Diſſenters in this country leſs entitled to liberty of conſcience, than the Papiſts in Canada? If they have only an equal claim to it, why is it granted to the latter, and the legal enjoyment of it refuſed to the former? I do not, indeed, remember to have met with any Proteſtant writer, except yourſelf, who ever thought that the Proteſtant Diſſenters and the Papiſts were to be conſidered as on an equal footing under this government; and I believe no man, pretending to be a Proteſtant, has ever in this view given the Papiſts the preference, at leaſt ſince the Revolution, excepting your colleague Dr. Shebbeare.

But your deſire of conſidering the Proteſtant Diſſenters as on a level with the Papiſts,

Papiſts, probably ariſes from that averſion to them which you ſometimes diſcover, and of which we have a curious ſpecimen in the *Falſe Alarm*, p. 52. Speaking of the oppoſition, you ſay, "None can indeed "wonder that it has been ſupported by "the *ſectaries*, the *conſtant fomenters of* "*ſedition*, and *never-failing confederates of* "*the rabble*, of whoſe religion *little now* "*remains* but hatred of eſtabliſhments." Of this malevolent and injurious account of the Diſſenters, I ſhall ſay but little; it is unneceſſary; as its manifeſt want of juſtice, and of truth, muſt be evident to every equitable and impartial member of the eſtabliſhed church. I ſhall, however, obſerve, that it may be conſidered as ſome tolerable kind of evidence, that the religion of the Diſſenters is not very near being extinguiſhed in this country, that there are now upwards of eleven hundred Diſſenting congregations in England, ſupported by voluntary contributions among themſelves, without including either Methodiſts or Quakers.

But it is not only that part of the Quebec Act which relates to the Romiſh religion

religion that is cenſurable; what is ſtill more alarming is, that ſo conſiderable a part of the Britiſh dominions ſhould have a deſpotic government eſtabliſhed in it. The inhabitants are not only deprived of trial by jury in civil caſes, but the government of the province, and the power of making laws, are inveſted in perſons appointed ſolely by the king and privy council. No aſſembly of the people, as in other Britiſh colonies, is to be allowed; it being *at preſent inexpedient (u)*; and we have no reaſon to expect that thoſe in power will hereafter diſcover its expediency. The management of the colony, therefore, is entirely entruſted to the King, and the creatures of the crown; and the perſons who are nominated for this purpoſe by his majeſty, and who are honoured with the title of a *legiſlative council*, have alſo power given them to make *ordinances touching religion*, which may direct fines, to any amount, or impriſonment for three months, as they ſhall think proper; and they may enact ſeverer laws relative to religion, if they are ſuch as his majeſty ſhall be graciouſly

(u) *Vid.* the Act.

graciouſly pleaſed to approve. The King may alſo erect ſuch courts of criminal, civil, and eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, as he *ſhall think neceſſary and proper*. And the boundaries of the province of Quebec are extended by the Act, that the advantages of this bleſſed ſyſtem of government may be the more widely diffuſed.

For what purpoſe was Quebec retained by England at the laſt peace? Was it that it ſhould be made an Engliſh colony, in which Engliſh ſubjects might have the liberty of ſettling? If this was any part of the deſign, it appears to be almoſt entirely defeated by the Act. What man deſerving the name of Engliſhman, who has ever enjoyed the bleſſings of freedom, or formed any juſt notions of its value, would ever chuſe to retire to the province of Quebec, where no religion but the Romiſh is countenanced by government, and where French laws, and an arbitrary government, are eſtabliſhed? Of what uſe then is Quebec to this Kingdom, or what purpoſe does our poſſeſſion of it anſwer, under ſuch circumſtances, excepting merely the aggrandizement of the power of the crown?

All the future Engliſh ſettlers in Canada, as well as thoſe who are now there, are, while this act continues in force, to be deprived of their freedom and their laws; though it has been acknowledged by an advocate for the Quebec Act *(w)*, that the Engliſh who are now ſettled in the province, "*fervently* deſired to be governed "by the laws of England." Was not ſome regard due to Engliſh Proteſtants, as well as to French Papiſts? Or, was Canada conquered by Britiſh arms, that Britiſh ſubjects might be compelled to ſubmit to Gallic laws?

You obſerve, that "Quebec is on the "other ſide the Atlantic, at too great a "diſtance to do much good or harm to "the European world." It appears, however, that your worthy colleague and brother-penſioner, Dr. Shebbeare, is of opinion, that Quebec may be made very uſeful in promoting the purpoſes of adminiſtration. The Quebec Act, he ſays, "has eſtabliſhed an AMPLE and SUFFI-"CIENT FORCE to quell the *democratic* "ſpirits

(w) Letter to the Earl of Chatham, p. 18.

" ſpirits of the Americans *(x)*." What thanks are not due to thoſe refined politicians, who have formed a ſcheme of employing an army of French Papiſts, to keep the New England heretics in order, or to exterminate them if they ſhould prove refractory! It is an admirable project; and ſimilar to that attributed to Charles I. of endeavouring to cruſh his rebellious Engliſh ſubjects by an army of Iriſh Catholics. The politics of Charles were alſo very refined; but it may not be amiſs to remember, that they at length brought him to the ſcaffold.

You obſerve, *Patriot, p.* 22. that " that " man is no Patriot, who juſtifies the ri- " diculous claims of American uſurpation; " who endeavours to deprive the nation of " its natural and lawful authority over its " own colonies." But it may very juſtly be queſtioned, whether the authority now claimed over the Americans be either na-

(x) Vid. Dr. Shebbeare's Pamphlet, p. 30. This Writer alſo ſays in another place, that by the laſt peace the nation acquired " a number of *loyal ſubjects* " to oppoſe the rebellious intentions of the *democratic* " *ſectaries* in America." p. 69.

tural or lawful. There are, perhaps, other claims, at leaſt as ridiculous, as thoſe to which you have given that appellation. Nor do I apprehend, that it is a juſt impeachment of any man's patriotiſm, that he diſapproves of the late proceedings reſpecting the Americans, or that he thinks more may be alledged in vindication of the colonies, than will be admitted at St. James's.

You ſay, *Patriot*, p. 23. "He that "accepts protection, ſtipulates obedience. "We have always protected the Ameri- "cans; we may therefore ſubject them "to government." This argument is not good. We protected the Portugueſe in the laſt war, but no man ſuppoſed that on that account we had a right to their *obedience*, or to *ſubject them to government*. And however differently the Americans may be circumſtanced, from their more intimate connection with Great Britain, it is certain, that our having protected them, even though we had not done it from a regard to our own intereſt, can give us no right to reduce them to ſlavery.

You

You obſerve, that the "power which "can take away life, may ſeize upon "property. The parliament may enact "for America a law of capital puniſh-"ment; it may therefore eſtabliſh a mode "and proportion of taxation." Perhaps the beſt method of refuting this argument, is to ſhew the conſequences to which it would lead. If it be admitted, the King and parliament muſt be the abſolute and uncontroulable lords of the Americans. If the Britiſh parliament, in which the Americans have no repreſentatives, can enact any laws of capital puniſhment reſpecting them, can *take away life, ſeize upon property*, and tax them at pleaſure, are the Americans, in a political view, more free than the inhabitants of the empire of Morocco? Are not their lives, properties, and privileges, wholly at the diſpoſal of others? If it ſhould be ſuppoſed, contrary to fact and late experience, that they would not meet with rigorous treatment from a Britiſh parliament, this makes no alteration in the argument. The Negro who has a kind maſter is as much a ſlave, as he who has a ſevere one. When all this is conſidered, perhaps it may eaſily be

diſcerned, to whom *ridiculous claims* ought moſt juſtly to be attributed.

THE preſent conteſt with America appears to be one of the moſt unhappy, in which this country ever was engaged. It is a conteſt in which we have almoſt every thing to loſe, and in which nothing can be gained. What may be the event of it, or how fatal its conſequences, either to Great Britain or the colonies, no man can foreſee. Whether we cruſh them by force, or they are ſucceſsful in reſiſting our pretenſions, in either caſe this nation muſt greatly ſuffer. And ſhould our enemies on the continent take this opportunity of attacking us, how perilous would be our ſituation? Can thoſe then, whatever offices they may hold, be conſidered as real friends to this country, who are precipitating ſuch meaſures againſt the Americans, as may, in the event, bring the Britiſh empire to the brink of deſtruction? Is it more probable, that this conduct is dictated by wiſdom and by juſtice, or by the mere luſt of power, without any regard to the moſt important intereſts either of Great Britain, or the colonies?

You aſſert in the *Patriot*, p. 27. that thoſe can lay no claim to the illuſtrious appellation of patriots, "who impute want "of public ſpirit to the late parliament." I confeſs, that had it not been for your information, I ſhould never have ſuſpected, that faith in the public ſpirit of the laſt parliament, was an eſſential mark of patriotiſm. But you are an uncommon genius, and have therefore a right to make uncommon diſcoveries.

You ground your argument in ſupport of the public ſpirit of the laſt parliament, on their having paſſed Mr. Grenville's bill for determining conteſted elections, and another for abridging the privileges of members of parliament. It ſhould ſeem, that the good works of the laſt parliament were not very numerous, becauſe different advocates in its favour fix on the ſame two acts as evidences of its virtue. A fellow labourer with yourſelf in the royal vineyard, the Rev. Mr. John Weſley, did alſo, near four years ago, though at ſecond hand, alledge theſe acts in juſtification of the

the *King*'s laſt *parliament (y)*. But I ſhould rather be of opinion, that *two* good acts, in the courſe of about ſeven years, could hardly be a proof that a parliament had no deficiency of public ſpirit. Some perſons may poſſibly think, that the merit of theſe two acts was much more than over-balanced, by the iniquity of the new Game and Dog Acts, the Royal marriage act, the Eaſt-India company act, the Boſton Port Act, the Act for changing the government of the province of Maſſachuſet's Bay, and the Quebec Act; not to ſpeak of the violation of the right of election by the laſt parliament, and the facility with which they voted half a million of the public money to pay civil liſt debts, without examination or account.

Is there an impartial man in this country, who underſtands its conſtitution, who will aſſert, that the laſt Houſe of Commons acted like the real repreſentatives of the people? In how many inſtances, during the ſeven years wherein they were aſſembled, did they vote in conformity to the

(y) Vid. Weſley's Free Thoughts on the preſent State of public Affairs, 8vo. 1770. p. 26, 27.

the wiſhes and intereſt of their conſtituents, when they were contrary to the will and pleaſure of the miniſter, or of his maſter? Or can it be conceived poſſible, that the Prime Miniſter would have dared ſo openly to direct the determinations and proceedings of the laſt Houſe of Commons, if they had poſſeſſed any proper ſenſe of their own duty, or their own dignity?

If under the moſt ſolemn obligations to act on behalf of thoſe by whom they were elected, the laſt Houſe of Commons almoſt invariably ſupported every meaſure of the miniſter for the time being; if inſtead of conſidering what was the ſenſe of their conſtituents, they attended only to the nod of the prime miniſter; if inſtead of being the guardians of the people's rights, they were the mere creatures of the crown, on the proceedings of which they ought to have been a check; if they were induced by places, penſions, contracts, lottery-tickets, and other *douceurs*, to ſacrifice the intereſts of thoſe from whom they received their delegated power, and for whom they ſhould have acted as faithful truſtees; if this was the character

of the majority of the laſt Houſe of Commons, and I believe few impartial men entertain many doubts upon the ſubject, I know no words in our language, that can convey too ſevere a cenſure of their baſeneſs, ſervility, and treachery to their conſtituents.

In the 32d page of the *Patriot*, you ſay, "That the next Houſe of Commons "may act upon the principles of the "laſt, with more conſtancy, and higher "ſpirit, muſt be the wiſh of all, who "wiſh well to the public." But this is merely your aſſertion, and appears to be unſupported by reaſon or by truth. I believe, on the contrary, that it is the ſincere wiſh of all who are friends to the free conſtitution of this country, that the new Houſe of Commons may act on principles exceedingly different from the laſt; that they may attend more to the real intereſts of the nation, and leſs to their own private emolument; that they may be more tender of the rights of the people, and leſs ready to comply with the requiſitions of the miniſtry; and that if they do diſcover more ſpirit than the laſt, it may not be exerted in trampling on the privileges of

thoſe whom they repreſent, and whom they are bound by the moſt ſacred obligations to defend; but in treating with the contempt and indignation they deſerve, any efforts of a firſt Lord of the Treaſury, to direct their deliberations, or to controul their parliamentary deciſions; and in bringing knaviſh miniſters to juſtice, and to that exemplary puniſhment which they deſerve, though they ſhould take ſhelter behind the throne.

It is ſomewhat curious to obſerve, how much your Jacobitiſm is apt to break forth, notwithſtanding your preſent zeal in ſupport of the government of a Prince of the Houſe of Hanover. All your newly acquired loyalty to George III. cannot make you forget your much-favoured Houſe of Stuart, nor wholly remove your attachment to it. It was too deeply rooted, and become too natural to you, to be totally eradicated:

Naturam expelles furca, tamen uſque recurret.

In the *Falſe Alarm*, p. 51. you ſay, that "the ſtruggle in the reign of Anne,

" was to exclude or reſtore an *exiled King*." This exiled King was the Pretender. And notwithſtanding the many reſplendent virtues which you have diſcovered in his preſent majeſty, you are far from paying any compliments to his predeceſſors ſince the expulſion of the Houſe of Stuart. For you inform us, that the prince from whom you received your penſion, and in whoſe reign of conſequence your loyalty commenced, is " the only king, who, for " *almoſt a century*, has much appeared to " deſire, or much endeavoured to deſerve" the affections of the people *(z)*. The caution, and attention to chronology, with which you expreſs yourſelf here, is truly admirable; you compliment his preſent majeſty, but take care to exclude from your liſt of thoſe Kings, who deſerved the affections of the people, William III. George I. and George II. At the ſame time, leaving room for your readers to draw all honourable concluſions in favour of their predeceſſors, the Stuarts; whom you have entirely excepted from your cenſure; and, indeed, it ought to be remembered, that

if,

(z) Falſe Alarm, p. 50.

if, peradventure, they had a few faults, they were amply atoned for by that divine and hereditary right, which reſided in their ſacred perſons!

You obſerve of *Falkland's Iſland, Patriot*, p. 20. "that it is a bleak and barren ſpot "in the Magellanic ocean, of which no "uſe could be made, unleſs it were a place "of exile for the hypocrites of Patriotiſm." But, perhaps, a better uſe might be made of it. It would at leaſt be as well adapted for the reception of men, who, though born under a free conſtitution of government, have no ſenſe of its value, or concern for its preſervation; who are ready to proſtitute their talents in the ſervice of every miniſter who will employ them; or who have ſo much attachment to deſpotic principles, as to be for ever incapable of becoming real friends to that public liberty, by which this country has been ſo long, and ſo honourably diſtinguiſhed. Men of ſlaviſh principles muſt ever be unworthy members of a free ſtate. And as to yourſelf, however unwilling you may now be, when you can baſk in the beams of royal favour, to remove to a ſpot like this, there was a

time

time when you ſeemed to languiſh for ſuch a retreat: when you pathetically exclaimed,

Has Heav'n reſerv'd, in pity to the poor,
No pathleſs waſte, or undiſcover'd ſhore?
No ſecret iſland in the boundleſs main?
No peaceful deſart, yet UNCLAIM'D BY SPAIN?
Quick let us riſe, the happy ſeats explore,
And bear OPPRESSION'S INSOLENCE *no more (a).*

IT is a misfortune which has attended your political writings, that they have degraded your own character, without rendering much ſervice to thoſe by whom you were employed. I believe no writer of your abilities ever engaged in politics, whoſe productions were of ſo little effect, and ſo unprofitable to his patrons. And you may in many reſpects be conſidered as a memorable inſtance of human weakneſs. For though you have given evidences of great force of genius, you have at the ſame time diſcovered ſuch little prejudices, and ſuch bigotted attachments, as would have diſgraced a common underſtanding.

YOU

(a) Johnſon's LONDON, *ut ſupra.*

You will probably, with that haughtineſs which is natural to you, but which even your beſt friends muſt acknowledge to be a conſiderable flaw in your character, affect to diſregard whatever can be offered againſt your conduct, or your writings. But ſhould you ever again really be influenced by thoſe principles of virtue, which you have ſo forcibly inculcated on others, you will regret that your time has been miſemployed in the vindication of meaſures, which ſhould have excited the indignation of every honeſt man. I would, however, wiſh you to remember, ſhould you again addreſs the public under the character of a political writer, that luxuriance of imagination, or energy of language, will ill compenſate for the want of candour, of juſtice, and of truth. And I ſhall only add, that ſhould I hereafter be diſpoſed to read, as I heretofore have done, the moſt excellent of all your performances, THE RAMBLER, the pleaſure which I have been accuſtomed to find in it will be much diminiſhed by the reflexion, that the writer of ſo moral, ſo elegant, and ſo valuable a work, was capable of proſtituting his

talents

talents in ſuch productions, as the *Falſe Alarm*, the *Thoughts on the Tranſactions reſpecting Falkland's Iſlands*, and the *Patriot*.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

IT is ſomewhat worthy of obſervation, that at the preſent period, the penſioned-advocates for the court ſhould be of opinion, as it appears they are by their writings, that the beſt method they can take of gratifying their patrons, is to degrade the characters of King William and Queen Mary, to traduce the revolution, and the moſt illuſtrious patriots of the laſt age, and to pour out the moſt ſcurrilous abuſe on the Proteſtant Diſſenters. Of this we have an extraordinary ſpecimen in a piece lately publiſhed by Dr. Shebbeare, intitled, "An Anſwer to the Queries con-"tained in a letter to Dr. Shebbeare, "printed in the Public Ledger, Aug. 10. "together with animadverſions on two "ſpeeches," &c. in which he has alſo made a compariſon between the public and private virtues of their preſent majeſties, and thoſe of King William and

Queen Mary; and likewiſe, as the Doctor himſelf ſays, *fairly ſtated* the merits of Roman Catholics, and of Diſſenters from the Church of England, reſpecting allegiance and liberty, and their claims to national protection.

It is not my deſign to enter into a particular examination, or refutation, of Dr. Shebbeare's voluminous pamphlet. It is the leſs neceſſary, as the Doctor's performance is ſo full of groſs ſcurrility, and evident malignity, and ſo totally deſtitute of any appearance of juſtice, or of candour, that it carries in a great degree its own antidote with it. I ſhall, however, make a few obſervations on this curious production.

In the preceding letter, I have given ſome inſtances of the politeneſs with which Dr. Johnſon has treated the popular party, and thoſe againſt whom he has thought proper to engage. In like manner, I ſhall here ſelect a few ſpecimens of a ſimilar ſtile from Dr. Shebbeare; as both he and his brother-penſioner have much diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this way, though

it

it may be presumed, that neither of these courtly gentlemen acquired this kind of language in the drawing room.

Dr. Shebbeare stiles the popular party, *the remorseless crew of present patriots (a)*, and also says, they "are *the spawn* of those "who were uniformly rebels to the *(b)* "best of Kings *(c)*." The Americans, he stiles *graceless subjects*, *trans-Atlantic sectaries*, and *rebellious ingrates (d)*. He also says, they were *conscious of their internal rottenness of soul (e)*; and that from their hearts "it would be excessively more dif-"ficult to eradicate ingratitude, than to "divest arsenic of the power of poison-"ing *(f)*." The Dissenters he compliments with the title of *sectarian crews*, and also speaks of *the infernal altar of Presbyterian perfidy, in whose religion* REGICIDES ALONE *are saints (g)*. The Bishop of St. A—ph, he says, is a *speech-printing*

(a) P. 132.

(b) The Doctor, it is presumed, means the blessed Martyr.

(c) Shebbeare's Pamphlet, p. 92. (d) P. 111.

(e) P. 112. (f) P. 110, 111. (g) P. 173, 174.

printing Iſcariot (h); and he is of opinion, that Biſhop Burnet was "as great a *villain*, "and merited death as much as Garnet," the Jeſuit, who was executed for being concerned in the powder-plot *(i)*.

THIS is a moſt admirable hiſtorical ſtyle! and from which the public may be enabled to form ſome judgment, of what is to be expected from the Doctor's projected Hiſtory of England. For though Dr. Shebbeare's late piece be not properly an Hiſtory, yet it contains ſo many hiſtorical facts, or at leaſt what he has thought proper to give as ſuch, that it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed he intended it as a ſpecimen of his hiſtorical talents.

The Doctor ſays of the truly illuſtrious ALGERNON SYDNEY, not only that he was a *fanatic viſionary (k)*, but that "no "hiſtory has yet produced a more *ſan-* "*guinary* and *ungrateful traitor (l)*." And he has quoted a paſſage from one of Sydney's letters to Henry Savile, in order to confirm the charge of corruption, which has been lately brought againſt Sydney, grounded

(h) P. 124. (i) P. 145. (k) P. 55. (l) P. 59.

grounded on Barillon's letters, as publiſhed by Sir John Dalrymple *(m)*. But this pretended new evidence againſt Sydney, appears to be founded on nothing but a wilful perverſion of the meaning of his letter. For it muſt be manifeſt to any man, who will read the letter referred to by Dr. Shebbeare *(n)*, that Sydney, who wrote from London to Savile then in France, and who was giving him an account of the ſtate of public affairs in England, when he ſaid, "You know Monſ. "Barillon governs us, if he be not miſ-"taken," meant only, that Barillon thought he managed the councils of the Engliſh court; and not that he governed Sydney and Savile as individuals. It is well known to be common for private perſons, when converſing on political ſubjects, to uſe the phraſe *our affairs*, when ſpeaking of the public affairs of the kingdom; or to

(m) Vid. ſome obſervations on this ſubject in "An "Examination into the Nature and Evidence of the "Charges brought againſt Lord William Ruſſel and "Algernon Sydney, by Sir John Dalrymple, Bart. in "his Memoirs of Great Britain." 8vo. 1773.

(n) Vid. Letters of Sydney to Savile, edit. 8vo. 1742. *p.* 130.

to ſay the French have defeated, or outwitted *us*, when the perſons ſpeaking have not the leaſt reference to themſelves as individuals, but only ſpeak of themſelves as members of the community at large. It is evidently in this manner that Sydney uſes the phraſe *governs us*, in the letter referred to. So that Dr. Shebbeare, when he quoted this paſſage as a proof, that "Sydney and Savile were ſecretly in-"triguing with the French court," is unqueſtionably guilty of a groſs and ſhameful miſrepreſentation.

As to the Doctor's reflexions againſt SYDNEY, on the ſuppoſition of his being a republican, it may be ſufficient to obſerve, that if this juſtly celebrated man, in conſequence of the abuſe which he had ſeen of regal power, was of opinion, that a republican form of government would be moſt advantageous to the people of this country, there are few men of ſenſe who will form a very unfavourable opinion of him on that account. The great deſign for which civil government is eſtabliſhed, is the promotion of the intereſt and happineſs of the people; and modes of govern-

ment

ment are of little conſequence, but ſo far as they are more or leſs adapted to that end. The private intereſt of a particular prince, or family, is of trifling conſideration, when compared with the welfare of a whole nation.

As Dr. Shebbeare ſeems to take a peculiar pleaſure in blackening ſome of the moſt excellent characters, and eſpecially if they have been friends to public liberty, he has introduced Lord SOMERS, as one of thoſe, "who had violated the conſti-"tution, and plundered their country." But as it is no part of my deſign to enter here into a minute examination of the conduct of Lord Somers, I ſhall content myſelf with inſerting a part of what has been ſaid of this celebrated nobleman, by Mr. Addiſon and Mr. Horace Walpole; as it is poſſible that the public may pay *nearly* as much regard to their opinion upon this ſubject, as to that of Dr. Shebbeare.

Mr. ADDISON obſerves, that Lord SOMERS "had worn himſelf out in his "application to ſuch ſtudies as made him "uſeful or ornamental to the world, in

" concerting ſchemes for the welfare of his
" country, and in proſecuting ſuch mea-
" ſures as were neceſſary for making thoſe
" ſchemes effectual: but all this was done
" with a view to the public good that
" ſhould riſe out of theſe endeavours, and
" not to the fame that ſhould accrue to
" himſelf. Let the reputation of the
" action fall where it would; ſo his
" country reaped the benefit of it, he was
" ſatisfied. As his turn of mind threw off
" in a great meaſure the oppoſitions of
" envy and competition; it enabled him
" to gain the moſt vain and impracti-
" cable into his deſigns, and to bring
" about ſeveral great events for the ſafety
" and advantage of the public, which
" muſt have died in the birth, had he been
" as deſirous of appearing beneficial to
" mankind, as of being ſo. As he was
" admitted into the ſecret and moſt retired
" thoughts and counſels of his royal maſter
" King William, a great ſhare in the plan
" of the Proteſtant ſucceſſion is univerſally
" aſcribed to him. And if he did not en-
" tirely project the union of the two king-
" doms, and the bill of regency, which
" ſeem to have been the only methods in

" human

" human policy, for ſecuring to us ſo in-
" eſtimable a bleſſing, there is none who
" will deny him to have been the chief
" conductor in both theſe glorious works."

" His life was, in every part of it, ſet
" off with that graceful modeſty and re-
" ſerve, which made his virtues more
" beautiful, the more they were caſt in
" ſuch agreeable ſhades. His religion was
" ſincere, not oſtentatious; and ſuch as
" inſpired him with an univerſal benevo-
" lence toward all his fellow ſubjects, not
" with bitterneſs againſt any part of them.
" He ſhewed his firm adherence to it as
" modelled by our national conſtitution,
" and was conſtant to its offices of devotion,
" both in public and in his family. He
" appeared a champion for it with great
" reputation in the caſe of the ſeven
" biſhops, at a time when the church was
" really in danger. To which we may
" add, that he held a ſtrict friendſhip and
" correſpondence with the great Arch-
" biſhop Tillotſon, being acted by the
" ſame ſpirit of candour and moderation;
" and moved rather with pity than indig-
" nation towards the perſons of thoſe, who

" differed from him in the uneſſential parts " of Chriſtianity. His great humanity ap- " peared in the minuteſt circumſtances of " his converſation. You found it in the " benevolence of his aſpect, the compla- " cency of his behaviour, and the tone of " his voice. His great application to the " ſeverer ſtudies of the law, had not in- " fected his temper with any thing poſitive " or litigious. He did not know what it " was to wrangle on indifferent points, to " triumph in the ſuperiority of his under- " ſtanding, or to be ſupercilious on the " ſide of truth. He joined the greateſt " delicacy of good breeding to the greateſt " ſtrength of reaſon."

Mr. Addiſon alſo obſerves, that as Lord Somers greatly contributed in his political capacity " to the eſtabliſhment of the " Proteſtant intereſt, and the good of his " native country, he was always true to " thoſe great ends. His character was " uniform, and conſiſtent with itſelf, and " his whole conduct of a piece. His " principles were founded in reaſon, and " ſupported by virtue *(o)*."

Mr.

(o) Freeholder, No. 39.

Mr. HORACE WALPOLE ſays of Lord SOMERS, that "he was one of thoſe "divine men, who, like a chapel in a "palace, remain unprofaned, while all "the reſt is tyranny, corruption, and "folly. All the traditional accounts of "him, the hiſtorians of the laſt age, and "its beſt authors, repreſent him as the "moſt incorrupt lawyer, and the honeſt-"eſt ſtateſman, as a maſter orator, a ge-"nius of the fineſt taſte, and a patriot of "the nobleſt and moſt extenſive views; "as a man who diſpenſed bleſſings by his "life, and planned them for poſterity."

"The momentous times in which he "lived, gave Lord Somers opportunities of "diſplaying the extent of his capacity, "and the patriotiſm of his heart; oppor-"tunities as little ſought for the former, "as they were honeſtly courted and pur-"ſued for the latter. The excellent ba-"lance of our conſtitution never appeared "in a clearer light than with relation to "this Lord, who, though impeached by "a miſguided Houſe of Commons with "all the intemperate folly that at times "diſgraced the free ſtates of Greece, yet

"had

" had full liberty to vindicate his innocence,
" and manifeſt an integrity, which could
" never have ſhone ſo bright, unleſs it
" had been juridically aſperſed."

" It was no inglorious part of this great
" Chancellor's life, that when removed
" from the adminiſtration, his labours
" were ſtill dedicated to the ſervice of the
" government, and of his country. In
" this ſituation, above all the little pre-
" judices of a profeſſion, for he had no
" profeſſion but that of Solon and Lycur-
" gus, he ſet himſelf to correct the grie-
" vances of the law, and to amend the
" vocation he had adorned *(p)*."

Such was the man, who, becauſe he was a Whig, and a friend to liberty, hath been repreſented by Dr. Shebbeare, as a plunderer of his country, and a violator of its conſtitution!

In the 94th page of his pamphlet, Dr. Shebbeare has given a quotation from Dr. Price's

(p) Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, ſecond edition, vol. II. p. 107, 111, 112.

Price's "Appeal to the Public on the ſub-"ject of the national Debt;" but in ſo diſhoneſt and diſingenuous a manner, as few writers, beſides himſelf, would have ventured to be guilty of. The Doctor obſerves, that 'even Dr. Price, in his ap-'peal to the public, p. 39. in enume-'rating the cauſes of our preſent evils, 'introduces that of "giving ſecurity to "the Hanover ſucceſſion. This, ſays he, "is in truth the fundamental grievance of "the kingdom; and that patriotiſm, the "firſt object of which is not the removal "of it, can be nothing but an impoſture."

It is evident, that Dr. Shebbeare here meant to impoſe upon the public, by repreſenting Dr. Price as having ſpoken of the Hanover ſucceſſion as the fundamental grievance of the kingdom. But this is a moſt ſhameful miſrepreſentation; for the grievance alluded to by Dr. Price was, the pernicious influence which has been obtained in the Houſe of Commons. After ſpeaking of the Sinking Fund not being appropriated to its proper purpoſe, and ſuppoſing that this partly aroſe from a view to the dependance created by the national debt,

debt, and the ſecurity that gave to the Hanoverian ſucceſſion and the adminiſtration, Dr. Price proceeds as follows: "For "like reaſons and with like views, a per- "nicious influence was maintained and "promoted in the Houſe of Commons, "which has ſapped the conſtitution; and "which may in time eſtabliſh among us "a tyranny of the moſt intolerable kind; "a tyranny attended with the mockery of "all the forms of liberty; a tyranny "created, ſupported and ſanctified by a "PARLIAMENT. — This is, in truth, "the fundamental grievance of the king- "dom; and that Patriotiſm, the firſt ob- "ject of which, is not the removal of it, "can be nothing but an impoſture. To "this grievance we owe, among other "evils, the loſs of the ſinking fund. Had "the guardians of the ſtate been under no "undue influence, they would have been "more faithful; and could not have given "up this great ſecurity of the king- "dom (q)."

THOSE who compare this paſſage at length with the mutilated and unfair quotation

(q) Dr. Price's Appeal, p. 38, 39.

tation made by Dr. Shebbeare, will at once ſee the flagrancy of his miſrepreſentation, and be convinced how little credit can be due to ſuch a writer. Indeed, he hath been guilty of this miſrepreſentation for no other purpoſe, than to give an injujurious opinion to the public of a moſt reſpectable man, who is much and deſervedly eſteemed for his learning and abilities, and ſtill more for the worthineſs and integrity of his character.

But the greateſt demerit of Dr. Price is, his being a Diſſenter; and this charge lies equally againſt Dr. Priestley, whoſe free and manly ſpirit has alſo given offence to Dr. Shebbeare. And, therefore, he hath taken occaſion to introduce an imperfect quotation from his "Eſſay on the "firſt principles of government," partly for the purpoſe of making Dr. Prieſtley appear to write bad Engliſh. But Dr. Shebbeare ſhould have remembered, that what Dr. Prieſtley has ſaid in defence of the execution of Charles the Firſt, was on the ſuppoſition of that prince's being a convicted tyrant; ſo that Dr. Shebbeare has paid but a very aukward compliment to his

preſent Majeſty, in ſuppoſing that, on Dr. Prieſtley's principles, he was in any danger of being brought into the ſame ſituation(r).

Dr. SHEBBEARE is very much diſpleaſed with Mr. Lee, for having ſaid, with reference to Sir John Dalrymple, "Not that "I blame an hiſtorian for laying facts "before his readers, but I blame him "for prejudging a cauſe by preliminary remarks of his own; yet this is "the caſe of the compiler of the book "in queſtion; he prefaces his anecdotes "with a prejudication of characters." In all this, Dr. Shebbeare ſays, there is not one ſyllable of truth. For "theſe preliminary were poſterior remarks, and "were not printed in a preface to the "Memoirs; and therefore could be no "prejudication of the characters, unleſs "that which follows precedes the thing "which it ſucceeds. They were printed "in a preface to the ſecond volume, containing a collection of ſtate-papers, including indubitable facts, two years after "the Memoirs had been publiſhed. And "thus

(r) Vid. Shebbeare's pamphlet, p. 93, 94. compared with Dr. Prieſtley's Eſſay, p. 40.

" thus it happens, that the caſe which " Mr. Lee blames has no exiſtence *(s)*". But notwithſtanding the confidence with which this is aſſerted, it is evident, that this attack on Mr. Lee, and vindication of Dalrymple, is founded on nothing but ſophiſtry and miſrepreſentation. The charges againſt Ruſſel and Sydney, which have ſo much excited the attention of the public, were not contained in the firſt volume of Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs; but in the papers publiſhed in the ſecond; and it was the preface to this volume, that contained the paſſage for which Sir John Dalrymple has been cenſured. So that what Mr. Lee ſaid was ſtrictly true, that Sir John Dalrymple had prejudged the cauſe " by preliminary remarks of his " own;" and " prefaced his anecdotes " with a prejudication of characters." Nor is the mere unſupported aſſertion of Barillon, admitting the papers in queſtion to be genuine, by any means ſufficient to prove, that the charges againſt Ruſſel and Sydney are " indubitable facts *(t)*."

(s) Shebbeare, p. 63, 64.

(t) Vid. this ſubject further conſidered, in the *Examination*, &c. before referred to.

AMONGST others, againſt whom Dr. Shebbeare hath poured forth his abuſe, are thoſe clergymen of the eſtabliſhed church, who have lately aſſembled occaſionally at the Feathers tavern, in order to conſult about the proper means of procuring ſome relief in the caſe of eccleſiaſtical ſubſcription. Of theſe gentlemen, he ſays, that "their principles are the ſame "with republicans and regicides (*u*)," and therefore intimates, that it is neceſſary "to be watchful of their actions." But can there be a more egregious abſurdity, than to take it for granted, that a man muſt be a republican and a regicide, or of the ſame principles, becauſe he thinks there are ſome errors in the thirty-nine articles of the church of England?

Dr. SHEBBEARE ſometimes pretends, that he is not an enemy to the Revolution. Of this every man may judge for himſelf, when he reads the account which the Doctor has given of the manner in which it was effected. "On King James's abdi-"cation," he ſays, "a few men, un-"elected

(*u*) Shebbeare, p. 55.

" elected by the people, and at the exclu-
" ſion of all others, were called together
" by the Prince of Orange. Theſe tranſ-
" ferred the adminiſtration of public af-
" fairs into his hands, adviſed him to call
" a convention, though not yet a King;
" and this convention deprived King James
" of all future right to re-aſcend the throne
" of the three kingdoms *(x)*." In another place he ſays, " One hundred and ſixty
" men, with the mayor, aldermen, and
" deputies of London, were conſidered as
" a majority of the people of England;
" and the adminiſtration of the nation
" was imparted to him without the leaſt
" application for the conſent of the reſt
" of the nation. A convention was called
" by the Prince of Orange, the members
" of it were elected, and they placed the
" crown on the heads of him and the
" princeſs Mary, and excluded King James,
" without conſulting the people on that
" moſt momentous tranſaction *(y)*." The man who wrote this muſt unqueſtionably be

(x) Shebbeare, p. 72.

(y) P. 99.

be a very zealous friend to the Revolution!

It is evident, that Dr. Shebbeare's account of the character and adminiſtration of King William, is full of the groſſeſt miſrepreſentations; but if it were juſt, it would only prove, that too much confidence ought not to be placed in princes; and that, by whomſoever the throne may be filled, the people ought to guard with the utmoſt vigilance and caution againſt regal encroachments. Perhaps few princes have exerciſed their authority with more upright views than King William: but the hiſtory of mankind affords too many inſtances of princes and others, who have derived their power ſolely from the free choice of the people, and who yet, with the utmoſt wickedneſs and ingratitude, have betrayed the truſt repoſed in them, and totally diſregarded the intereſts of thoſe to whom they owed their elevation.

As to the Doctor's parallel between King William and his preſent Majeſty, I ſhall only obſerve, that it is in general very ſafe to libel dead Kings, and it may be profitable

table to flatter thoſe who are living. But if any man were to draw a character of the preſent King, in the ſame ſtile and manner as Dr. Shebbeare has done that of King William, it might poſſibly involve him in ſome inconveniencies. The Doctor fights on the higheſt and the ſafeſt ground; and his character of the preſent King is a ſufficient proof, that his penſion has not been given him for nothing.

AFTER ſuch ſpecimens of Dr. Shebbeare's talent at miſrepreſenting facts and characters, as he hath exhibited in his pamphlet, the public will certainly have little cauſe to regret their loſs, if he ſhould never finiſh his intended Hiſtory of England. They may poſſibly, however, conſider themſelves as ſomewhat obliged to him, for having already given them ſo compleat a demonſtration, of his total unfitneſs for any work of that kind.

Dr. SHEBBEARE's character of the Quebec Act, and the compliments he pays the Biſhops on the part they took in promoting it, are truly admirable, and need no comments. He obſerves, p. 124, that in this

this act "no circumstance seems to be o-
"mitted, which humanity and the Chri-
"stian faith can dictate: nothing enjoined,
"but what good polity hath suggested,
"and reason can support. And in no
"reign, since this kingdom hath existed,
"is there to be found one instance, in
"which the wisdom of the institution is
"so perfectly united with the precepts of
"Christ, and the virtues that dignify the
"best of men." He adds, that "to the
"*immortal honour of the prelacy of this*
"*realm*, they have, in the enacting of this
"law, afforded the most undeniable proof,
"that, by the doctrines which are taught
"in the evangelical writings, their actions
"have been *truly directed*."

THIS inimitable defender of the government acknowledges the corruption of the parliament, but defends it on the principle of *necessity*. "It appears," says he, "to be as easy to abolish the exist-
"ence of parliaments, as to eradicate the
"corruption of them *(z)*." The corruption of parliament is no more necessary to

(z) P. 39.

to the community, than any other ſpecies of iniquity; but there is no kind of wickedneſs, of which ſome men may not diſcover the convenience or expediency. And by whomſoever ſuch an undue parliamentary influence may have been introduced, it ſhould be the buſineſs of all honeſt men to oppoſe it to the utmoſt, and to endeavour to render contemptible and deteſtable, all who employ, promote, or participate of this corruption, which, of all our national evils, is the moſt formidable, and the moſt likely to be the deſtruction of this country.

THAT Dr. Shebbeare is not very ill inclined towards the Romiſh religion, may reaſonably be inferred from the very favourable manner in which he ſpeaks of Popery and the Jeſuits. But the Diſſenters, being generally friends to liberty, are honoured with a great ſhare of that rancorous abuſe, with which his performance ſo much abounds. Even the penal laws againſt the Papiſts, he attributes to the Preſbyterians; they are anſwerable, it ſeems,

for the moſt rigorous proceedings of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; for, "Leiceſter, Walſingham, and Cecil," he ſays, "were Puritans." But the Doctor has not very clearly informed us, who the ſtateſmen were, by whoſe influence the ſevere laws againſt Nonconformiſts in that reign were procured. It is probable they were not Puritans. However, the Doctor's ingenuity in ſuggeſting, that the Powder-plot in James the Firſt's reign, was probably formed by Cecil, who, he ſays, was "*a Preſbyterian at his ſoul*," is truly admirable! *(a)*

WITH reſpect to many things that are alledged by Dr. Shebbeare againſt the conduct of the Nonconformiſts during the civil war, and under the republican form of government which was for a ſhort time eſtabliſhed, it may be ſufficient to obſerve, that the Diſſenters of the preſent age, think themſelves no more anſwerable for the conduct of the Preſbyterians or Independents of the laſt century, than the Epiſ-

(a) P. 144, 145.

piſcopalians of the preſent age are for the cruelties exerciſed by Archbiſhop Laud and his colleagues, in the Star-chamber and High Commiſſion courts. As to the execution of Charles the Firſt, the Diſſenters are by no means agreed in their ſentiments reſpecting that tranſaction. There are, however, many of them, who are far from thinking it any diſhonour to their anceſtors, that they aſſiſted in bringing a tyrant to the block. They are of opinion, that Charles the Firſt demonſtrably was a tyrant, and a betrayer of the rights of the people, and that he well deſerved the fate he met with.

As to the ordinance of 1648, againſt hereſy and blaſphemy, referred to by Dr. Shebbeare, it is juſtly entitled to the ſevereſt cenſure; but it ſhould be obſerved, that it was by non-conformiſts to the church of England that it was prevented being put in execution. It may alſo be remarked, that the real principles of toleration were then very little underſtood by any party amongſt us. Mr. LOCKE was

the firſt writer who appears to have had clear ideas upon the ſubject. And it can hardly be conſidered as any very peculiar reproach to the Preſbyterians in the time of Cromwell, that they did not underſtand the principles of toleration, when it is remembered, that no other body of men in that age did; and that even in the preſent age, when theſe principles have been ſo much propagated, and ſo ably defended, the preſent Bench of Biſhops could not diſcover that Proteſtant Diſſenters in England had a right to a *legal* toleration; though ſince their rejection of the Diſſenters bill, their lordſhips judgments have been ſo much enlightened, either by the aſſiſtance of Lord North, or by ſome other means, that they have not only ſupported the claim of right of the Papiſts in Canada to the free exerciſe of their religion, but have voted them a legal eſtabliſhment of it, under the authority of a Britiſh Parliament.

With reſpect to the Proteſtant Diſſenters, they, like the members of the eſtabliſhed church, differ in their ſentiments

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of ſome public meaſures, and on political ſubjects. As a body of men, however, they have generally and juſtly been conſidered as firm friends to the Hanover ſucceſſion, as judging it friendly to the Proteſtant religion, and to civil liberty. And this attachment, of which they have given many proofs, will undoubtedly continue, ſo long as the princes of the preſent reigning family ſhall regulate their conduct by the principles of law, and of the conſtitution. However, it cannot be worth while for any body of men to enter into a formal conteſt with a writer, who chuſes chiefly to diſtinguiſh himſelf by groſs ſcurrility, and wilful miſrepreſentation. But the Diſſenters are not aſhamed of their principles as ſuch, for they are ſatisfied that they will bear the ſevereſt ſcrutiny; and they are, therefore, ready to meet the ableſt of their opponents on the fair ground of reaſon and of argument. And if it be a reproach to be warmly attached to the intereſts of civil, as well as religious liberty, and to deteſt tyranny, under whatever form it may appear, it is a reproach that many of them are well con-

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tent to bear. The friends of freedom, and of public virtue, are naturally objects of diſlike to the ſervile and the venal; and it can be no diſhonour to be reviled by the avowed tools of a miniſter, by ſtate-hirelings, and penſioned-paraſites.

FINIS.